GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:487
ANSWERED ON:23.02.2001
WASTAGE OF FOOD ARTICLES DUE TO INADEQUATE TECHNOLOGIES
BASUDEB ACHARIA

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether India wasted Rs.70,000 crores worth of food articles every year due to inadequate technologies;

(b) if so, whether there was a need to adopt technologies for extending the shelf-life of fruits and vegetables on one hand and proper processing of foodgrains on the other hand to check the wastage; and

(c) if so, the steps the Government have taken in this regard ?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI CHAUHAN)

(a) Exact quantum of foodgrain losses during post harvest period at farm level due to insects, rodents, moisture, birds, micro-organisms etc. is not known. However, a Committee headed by Dr.V.Panse, in its report submitted in 1968, had estimated annual post harvest losses in the foodgrains in various stages at 9.33%. These included losses during threshing (1.68%), transportation (0.15%), processing (0.92%), rodents (2.50%), birds (0.85%), insects (2.55%) and moisture (0.68%). A survey conducted by Directorate of Marketing and Inspection, Government of India, during 1973-74, had estimated post harvest losses in foodgrains to be about 5% out of which the storage losses were estimated at about 2.7%. A joint survey conducted by the Indian Agricultural Statistics Research Institute and Indian Grain Storage Management and Research Institute during 1985-88 in Bulandshahr district of UP had estimated total foodgrain losses at about 4.12% due to different factors at various post harvest period.

The post harvest losses in fruits and vegetables estimated by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) ranges from 20-30%.

(b) Various technologies are available for extending the shelf-life of fruits and vegetables. As regards foodgrains, most of them are now processed with modern technologies and there is very little scope for wastage during processing of foodgrains.

(c) The Government is operating plan schemes for extending assistance for adoption of modern technologies in handling of fruits and vegetables. The Government has also announced a National Policy for handling, storage and transportation of foodgrains in order to reduce the storage and transit losses by introduction of modern technology.